

To the Members of the California Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 557 without my signature.

This bill would allow audiologists to issue qualified medical evaluator (QME) reports relative to workers' compensation claims.

Although SB 557 would allow audiologists to issue a QME report, it would still require the final diagnosis to be made by a physician as audiologists are not able to render disability determinations in the workers' comp system. This could result in unnecessary delays for injured workers and increased costs to the system by delaying prompt resolution of claims. In addition, the proponents of this measure have not demonstrated an unmet need for evaluating hearing loss in the workers' comp system.

For these reasons, I am unable to sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger